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EDU 583

Essential Belief Statement

The teaching profession has always been an interest of mine. Working with students to help achieve goals and find their passion in life, is a dream come true and an honor. Throughout my schooling experience I have witnessed many students fall through the cracks. I feel that as a teacher, it is your job to make sure that does not happen. I want to be a teacher to help students find their way and path in life. I want to be there for them if they need help, assistance, someone to talk to, or just a person they trust. I had the luxury of having great mentors along the way and I feel that opportunity made a huge difference in my life. Everyone needs a mentor or someone they trust and feel comfortable with, and I want to provide that to all students that walk through my door.

I decided to focus on teaching mathematics for many reasons. First of all, the content was always easy for me in high school. I knew that when I graduated high school, I was going to go into a profession that uses a great deal of math. Second, it is one of the few subjects that can be taught with a very “hands on” approach. Creating “hand on” activities is very easy for the subject of math and makes a lot of sense to do so. The last reason is that the world around us constantly encompasses mathematics and its funny how few people take the time to realize it. I understand that I use math for everything that I do in my life and I wanted to open the eyes of others to see and embrace the same philosophy.

I currently teach mathematics to ELL (English Language Learners) students at Lewiston High School. At first, I took the position because it was offered to me at a job fair before graduating from UMF with my bachelor’s degree. I was excited to just have a job. As I advanced through my first year of teaching, I realized that there were no other students that I would rather teach, then my ELL students. I have never met a group of students who try so hard in my life. I am currently in my fourth year of teaching ELL mathematics at Lewiston High School, and I absolutely love it. I am so close to my students and we share a deep bond that is a rare commodity. Having my students for four years in a row has been extremely rewarding and comforting. We have been through so much together and if it was not for my students during the year 2011, I would not have made it through my personal situations.

The ELL department is a very close department. We collaborate on everything we do and on every student that we have. We work closely to make sure our students are being served appropriately, through academics as well as personally and culturally. I would have to say that actually have the ideal teaching environment in relationship to collaboration and working together decisively. Each member of the ELL department contributes something to the group. Each person has their own expertise and experience with ELL students, therefore if there is ever any question about curriculum or how to teach something specific, the questions are always answered. The department is also a great resource for any staff member in the school who may have questions about the ELL population and individual students they may have.

Since I am currently in my fourth year of teaching, I do not have much experience with taking on leadership roles. The only leadership role that I have is being trained as a mentor. I recently got state certified as a mentor and I look forward to helping a mentee throughout their first two years of teaching. On another note, I am a member of our PBIS (positive behavior intervention of schools) team, and this school year, we will be implementing a great deal of change and training other staff members about the PBIS program. Over the years, I have become a resource for teachers in the building, in terms of helping them with teaching ELL students and how to go about teaching them correctly and effectively. Although my leadership roles in education are slim, I look forward to actively participating in more programs and becoming more known throughout the school as a resource.

The learning style inventory, I feel, represents who I am and how I operate as an individual. I had two styles that rose above the rest and the two were social and solitary. I believe that they both represent the type of learner I am as well as how I am as a colleague to work with. As a learner, I tend to do better in a social setting when learning new ideas and concepts. I like to discuss and collaborate with other students or colleagues when learning new material. I like to ask questions about what I am learning, and I really benefit from hearing other people’s point of view or feelings about the matter being covered. It helps to make it more concrete.

On the flip side, as a worker/teacher, I enjoy the solitary style of learning. I would rather work alone on lessons, projects, assignments, etc compared to with another person. I feel that if I want something done and done correctly, it is easier to do it myself. That way I know what the end product is and if it is not correct, then I can only blame myself. I like to rely on myself as opposed to someone else. I am a perfectionist and always on time with everything that I do, and therefore it is easier to work by myself to ensure that happens.

The vision/mission of Lewiston High School is “to foster academic and personal excellence by cultivating essential skills and positive attitudes while educating students to become productive citizens”. The vision of the school absolutely ties into my philosophy of my classroom and teaching in general. I feel that it is the teacher’s duty and responsibility to teach the content material, as well as to help students get ready for the real world outside of school. In my classroom, not only do I teach mathematics, but I also teach students the correct way to act, to be respectful, how to try your hardest at everything you do, as well as how to ask for help. Opening communication between yourself and your students will allow them to trust you and see you as a resource.

I am excited to take this class for two main reasons. The first reason is to find different ways to teach specific content to ensure positive and beneficial outcomes. This can be accomplished with help from other students in the class. I am curious to hear ideas from everyone else. The second reason reflects my concentration of administration. I would like to explore the ideas of the class as it pertains to enhancing curriculum, gaining a more realistic approach to what we should be teaching and how, as well as creating and understanding a better way for students to gain the information presented to them as it pertains to their everyday lives. I feel that students will better understand the topics and content that is being taught, if it can be related to their lives and made more concrete.